DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 261 CS 502 950

AUTHOR Cambra, Ronald; Klopf, Donald
TITLE A Profile of High School Forensic Participants in Hawaii.
PUB DATE Jun 80
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Communication Association of the Pacific--Japan (Kobe, Japan, June 14-15, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Behavior Rating Scales; *Communication Research; *Debate; *Personality Measures; *Public Speaking; Secondary Education; *Sex Differences; *Student Characteristics
IDENTIFIERS *Communication Apprehension; Forensics; Hawaii

ABSTRACT

Two studies were conducted to compare certain characteristics of high school students in Hawaii who take part in forensic activities with those not involved and also to compare groups of the forensic participants with each other. Three instruments were used: the Predisposition Toward Verbal Behavior Scale, the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation--Behavior, and the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension. The studies provided tentative support for the following conclusions: first, forensic participants seemed to be more predisposed toward verbal interaction did than nonparticipants. Second, participation in forensics tended to reduce apprehension about oral communication, as those participants with one or two years of experience did not in general perceive themselves to be as anxious about talking to others as did those with no experience or those not participating in forensics. Third, female forensic participants had stronger inclusion and affection needs, while the males had a stronger need to control social interactions. These needs appeared to get stronger the longer the students took part in forensics. (MKM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ronald Cambra
Donald Klopf

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED188261

A PROFILE OF HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC PARTICIPANTS IN HAWAII

by Ronald Cambra and Donald Klopf*

[Paper prepared for the Communication Association of the Pacific--Japan Conference, June 14-15, 1980.]

Recently we completed an exploratory study of high school contest speaker characteristics for purposes of discovering whether students in forensics differ from those not involved in such speech activities and whether those in forensics taking part in debate and public speaking events differ from those in the aesthetic events. We concluded that differences do exist in both instances. Our sample was small, however, and we felt that further study was necessary with other populations (2).

In September 1979, we replicated one part of the original study, that dealing with interpersonal relations and added a new dimension, that of communication apprehension with a population more representative of high school forensic participants in Hawaii. The results are reported here.

PREVIOUS FINDINGS

Before doing so, we should recapitulate the findings of the earlier study. Those combined with the results of the latest study ought to provide the makings of a profile of high school forensic participants, at least those in Hawaii.

Previously we administered the Predisposition Toward Verbal Behavior (PVB, 6) and the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation--Behavior (FIRO-B, 7) to 190 high school students of whom 108 engaged in forensics and 82 did not.

The PVB reveals people's perception of their predisposition toward verbal behavior. The theory is that people have impressions of their oral behavior and that these are consistent from one speech encounter to another. Also, these impressions consist of five factors: (1) domination of oral communication situations, (2) initiating and maintaining interpersonal communication, (3) frequency and duration of talk, (4) disinclination to talk, and (5) fluency or anxiety in communication situations (6).

The FIRO-B measures three needs that supposedly can be satisfied only in the company of other people. These three social needs are: (1) inclusion--the desire (or lack of desire) to be accepted, understood, listened to, well known; to join, to be social; (2) control--the desire (or lack of desire) to control others, be in charge, make the decisions; (3) affection--the degree to which people like to have close, personal relations with others, and the

---

*Cambra is Assistant Professor; Klopf, Professor and Chairman, Department of Speech, University of Hawaii.

CS512950

extent to which people will initiate relations or the capacity to want love.

Each has two dimensions--expressed and wanted. "Expressed" means how much of the need a person expresses or tries to give. "Wanted" means how much the person needs to get from others. Thus, for instance, the expressed control dimension indicates how much a person desires to control the lives of others, while the wanted control dimension indicates how much the person wants to be controlled by others (7).

Since we wanted to know if those interested in forensics are different than non-forensic participants, we compared the PVB and FIRO-B scores of the forensic and non-forensic groups.

From the PVB and FIRO-B comparisons of those interested in forensics and those not interested, we found tentative support for believing that those who participate in forensics possess stronger inclinations toward verbal behavior and weaker control and affection needs than those who do not. Specifically, those interested in forensics are more apt to initiate and maintain social interaction and to talk oftener and longer, more fluently and less anxiously than those who have no forensic interests. Additionally, the forensics inclined are less apt to want others to control them and are less in need of affection than those not inclined toward forensics (2).

In the first study, we also desired to know if there were differences among those involved in forensics, specifically, were the debaters and public speakers different than the oral interpretation contestants. Again, we compared the PVB and FIRO-B scores only to discover inconclusive results, probably because the samples were small, 20 to 30 students (2).

PRESENT STUDY

In September 1979, the FIRO-B and another instrument, the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA, 4), were administered to 390 public school forensic participants and 60 private school students.

The sample population also completed a personal history form consisting of the six characteristics we were interested in comparing. On the form they indicated their sex, school attended, year in school, number of years of forensic experience, forensic events engaged in, and future goals. Not all students responded to each item.

The public school students, our concern here, represented all but a half dozen schools with forensic programs in the state. They constituted approximately 35 percent of the students taking part in forensic activities at that time. The age range was 14 to 18 years, with 175 males and 213 females in these grade experience categories: freshmen--males 38, females 33; sophomores--males 47, females 52; juniors--males 33, females 64; seniors--males 57, females 64; no experience--males 93, females 103; one year of experience--males 64, females 77; and two years of experience--males 18, females 33.

The findings are presented next by instrument, the PRCA results first followed by the FIRO-B.

PRCA

The PRCA, as first reported in 1970 (4), was used to investigate the prevalence of oral communication apprehension among the students. The PRCA has been used in over 150 studies and its validity seems to have been adequately established (5). Respondents can agree or disagree on a five point scale with 20 items concerning oral communication apprehension. They indicate their feelings about communicating in dyadic, small group, and public speaking situations. The total apprehension score is the sum of the scores on the 20 items. Highly apprehensive persons score between 70 and 80, the severely apprehensive over 80.

As usually defined, apprehension about oral communication is a person's level of fear or anxiety with either real or anticipated talk with one or more persons. Between 15 and 20 percent of American college students suffer from debilitating communication apprehension and there is reason to believe the figure is higher at the secondary school level. By "debilitating" we mean apprehension of sufficient magnitude to interfere seriously with the individual's functioning in normal human encounters. Hence, oral communication apprehension is more than the stage fright normally associated with public performance; rather, it refers to a broad-based apprehension about oral communication. The apprehensive person not only experiences nervousness when giving a public speech, but is also anxious and fearful when talking to a peer or participating in a group session. The fear surpasses any rewards expected from speaking. Thus, the apprehensive usually speaks only when necessary. The result, McCroskey (5) concluded after reviewing over 100 research reports on oral apprehension, is a negative impact on an individual's economic, academic, political and social life.

For our research purposes, we hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the degree of oral communication apprehension between the participants in terms of these characteristics; (1) the type of school (public or private) they attend, (2) their sex (male or female), (3) the number of years they have engaged in forensics, (4) their year in school, (5) the type of forensic activity they engage in (debate only, individual events only, both debate and individual events), and (6) their life goal (go to work, a community college or the university).

Public versus Private Schools. We compared the PRCA scores of the public school participants ($M = 59.8$, $SD = 12.9$) with the scores of the sixty private school students ($M = 55.4$, $SD = 12.3$). The public school participants were significantly more apprehensive ($p < .01$). In the high and severe apprehensive groups were the following percentages of students: public (high 17%, severe 6%) and private (high 0.6%, severe 0.4%).

Males versus Females. When the males ($M = 59.9$, $SD = 12.6$) were compared to the females ($M = 59.8$, $SD = 13.2$), no significant difference occured. Eighteen percent of the males and 15 percent of the females were high apprehensives while 4 percent of the males and 9 percent of the females were severe apprehensives.

Years of Forensic Participation. The years-of-participation charactistic

dealt with three groups of students: (1) those who had no previous forensics experience at the time of the sample, (2) those with one year of experience, and (3) those with two years. When those with no experience (M = 6.5, SD = 11.3) were compared with those with one year (M = 56.1, SD = 11.6) and with two years (M = 49.1, SD = 11.5), significant differences ($p < .001$) appeared. Similarily, there was a significant difference ($p < .001$) between those with one and those with two years of experience. None of the students with two years of experience perceived themselves as high or severe apprehensives. Among the other two groups, these percentages resulted: no experience (high 27%, severe 11%) and one year experience (high 9%, severe 2%).

Included among those with no experience were students from all classes--freshman, sophomore, junior and senior.

Year in School. There were respondents from each of the four high school classes. When the freshmen (M = 63.7, SD = 11.8) were compared to the sophomores (M = 63.1, SD = 11.7), there was no significant difference. But when both freshmen and sophomores were compared to the juniors (M = 58.4, SD = 12.9) and seniors (M = 56.1, SD = 13.5) the differences were significant: freshmen/juniors ($p < .01$), freshmen/seniors ($p < .001$), sophomores/juniors ($p < .01$) and sophomores/seniors ($p < .001$). Percentage-wise, the freshmen had the highest percents in the high and severe groups (high 21%, severe 11%), followed by the sophomores (high 22%, severe 7%), the juniors (high 14%, severe 6%) and the seniors (high 12%, severe 3%).

Forensic Activity. When the students who claimed they participated only in debate (M = 56.5, SD = 13.2) were compared to those who participated only in the individual events (M = 51.7, SD = 11.2) and to those who both debated and engaged in the individuals (M = 51.8, SD = 14.1), no significant differences appeared. Nor was there a significant difference between those who only took part in the individuals and those who did both. The largest percent of high and severe apprehensives was among those who did both (high 9%, severe 2%), followed by the debaters (high 0%, severe 7%) and the individual event participants (high 5%, severe 0%).

Future Goals. When completing their personal history form, the respondents chose one of three future goals. They could choose going to work, a community college or a university. While there was no significant differences betweeen those in work (M = 62.2, SD = 12.7), the community college (M = 59.7, SD = 12.7), and the university (M = 59.6, SD = 13.0) groups, percentage-wise the work group had more apprehensives (high 19%, severe 9%) than the college (high 17%, severe 5%) and the university (high 16%, severe 5%) groups.

Conclusions. Our hypothesis was confirmed for three of the characteristics (sex, type of forensic activity and future goals) and rejected on three (type of school, years of participation, and year in school).

The three instances of rejection merit discussion. In the first case, the private school participants were less apprehensive than the public school ones, therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. The results are understandable. When prospective students apply for enrollemnt in one of the private schools included in the study, they are screened through written and oral examinations. To pass the oral exam, applicants have to demonstrate an ability to interact orally with others. Many apprehensives are likely to be screened out through

such a procedure. No such testing occurs in the public schools.

In the second instance of hypothesis rejection, that is, the years of forensics experience, the results are noteworthy. They indicate that the bulk of the apprehensives are found among the respondents with no experience--high 27 percent and severe 11 percent. The percentages drop drastically among those with one year of experience--high 9 percent, severe 2 percent. None of the respondents with two years of experience fall into the high or severe class. Perhaps the drop can be attributed to forensics participation since such participation does involve speech training. Speech training, according to previous research (3), does reduce apprehension.

The third instance of hypothesis rejection was that of the respondents' year in school. More apprehensives appeared among the freshmen than sophomores, more among sophomores than juniors, and more among juniors than seniors. Apparently the longer the students were in school, the less apprehensive they were. This may suggest that the first and second year students generally feel more insecure and anxious in the school setting than do those who have been there longer. After students have been in the school environment for a few years, they may feel more comfortable in their student role and consequently perceive themselves as more confident in their oral transactions with others.

In the second and third cases, the forensics coach or instructor should be aware that the beginning and lower division students most likely will experience anxiety and should make allowances for this or adjust the training program accordingly.

FIRO-B

As explained earlier in this paper, the FIRO-B measures three needs that people hold which can be satisfied only through some form of interaction with other people. The three needs--inclusion, control and affection--exist on two dimensions. The expressed dimension refers to how much of the need a person expresses; the wanted, how much a person wants of the need from others.

For research purposes, we hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the three needs between the participants in terms of the same six characteristics analyzed in the PRCA study. The results follow for each characteristic.

Public versus Private Schools. The private school students differed significantly ($p < .05$) on the expressed dimension of the inclusion need ($M = 5.5$, $SD = 1.9$) than the public school group ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 2.1$) and they differed significantly ($p < .001$) on the expressed control need ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 2.8$) than the public school group ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 2.3$). Interestingly, for both groups the mean scores, when compared to the scores obtained in the development of the FIRO-B, place them in the "average" range ($M = 4.0$ to 6.9) on expressed inclusion and the "low" range ($M = 1.0$ to 3.9) on the expressed control needs suggesting that these needs are not very dominate in the lives of the typical student in either group. The same observation can be made about the mean scores on the dimensions of the other needs, none of which showed a

significant difference, as these results show: expressed affection--private (M = 4.5, SD = 2.6), public (M = 4.2, SD = 2.7); wanted inclusion--private (M = 4.8, SD = 3.4), public (M = 4.5, SD = 3.4); wanted control--private (M = 3.9, SD = 2.9), public (M = 3.9, SD = 2.5), and wanted affection--private (M = 4.2, SD = 2.9), public (M = 4.3, SD = 2.8).

Male versus Female. The males differed significantly from the females on all but one dimension of the three needs. That was the wanted control need: males (M = 4.1, SD = 2.5) and females (M = 3.8, SD = 2.6). The significant differences between the males and females on the others are: expressed inclusion ($p < .005$)--male (M = 4.6, SD = 2.2), females (M = 5.2, SD = 1.9); expressed control ($p < .005$)--male (M = 3.1, SD = 2.3), female (M = 2.4, SD = 2.2); expressed affection ($p < .001$)--male (M = 3.7, SD = 2.7), female (M = 4.7. SD = 2.7); wanted inclusion ($p < .005$)--male (M = 3.9, SD = 3.5), female (M = 4.9, SD = 3.3); wanted affection ($p < .01$)--male (M = 3.9, SD = 2.9), female (M = 4.7, SD = 2.7). As expected, the mean scores fall in the average or low range with the males having a slightly stronger need to express control and want control as compared to the females who have stronger expressed inclusion and affection and wanted inclusion and affection.

Years of Forensic Experience. Students with no experience differed significantly that the more experienced participants on these needs: expressed control ($p < .005$)--no experience (M = 2.3, SD = 2.1), one year (M = 3.1, SD = 2.3), two years (M = 3.3, SD = 2.5); expressed affection ($p < .01$)--none (M = 3.8, SD = 2.7), one year (M = 4.6, SD = 2.7), two years (M = 4.8, SD = 2.7); and wanted affection ($p < .01$)--none (M = 4.0, SD = 2.7), two years (M = 5.2, SD = 3.1). On the other needs, there was no significant differences as the results reveal: expressed inclusion--none (M = 4.7, SD = 2.1), one year (M = 5.1, SD = 2.2), two years (M = 5.2, SD = 1.9); wanted inclusion--none (M = 4.5, SD = 3.4), one year (M = 4.5, SD = 3.5), two years (M = 4.6, SD = 3.5); wanted control--none (M = 3.7, SD = 2.4), one year (M = 3.9, SD = 2.6), two years (M = 4.3, SD = 2.9); wanted affection--none (M = 3.9, SD = 2.7), one year (M = 4.5, SD = 2.8). When the students with one year experience were compared to those with two years, there were no significant differences on any of the needs.

Year in School. Freshmen did not differe significantly from the sophomores on any of the needs but they did on several when compared to the juniors and seniors. The areas of significant differences between the freshmen and juniors are: expressed inclusion--frosh (M = 4.5, SD = 2.0), juniors (M = 5.3, SD = 2.0, $p < .01$); expressed affection--frosh (M = 3.4, SD = 2.5) juniors (M = 4.7, SD = 2.7, $p < .001$); wanted affection--frosh (M = 3.8, SD = 2.5), juniors (M = 4.9, SD = 2.8, $p < .05$). The areas of significant difference between the freshmen and seniors were: expressed affection--frosh (M = 3.4, SD = 2.5), seniors (M = 4.5, SD = 2.9, $p < .01$); wanted affection--frosh (M = 3.8, SD = 2.5), seniors (M = 4.8, SD = 3.0, $p < .05$). There were no significant differences between the juniors and seniors on the needs.

Forensic Activity. When the debators were compared to those students in the debate/individual events category and the individual events only category, only one instance of significant difference appeared, that in expressed inclusion between the debate/individual events (M = 4.4, SD = 1.9) and debators

(M = 5.5, SD = 2.3, $p < .05$). Similarily, there was one instance of significant difference between the debate/individual events (M = 4.4, SD = 1.9) and individual events only (M = 5.6, SD = 1.9, $p < .001$) on the expressed inclusion need.

Goals. The students intending to work after graduation were compared to those expecting to enroll in a community college and to enroll in a university. The significant differences were: expressed inclusion--work (M = 4.1, SD = 2.1), university (M = 5.1, SD = 2.1, $p < .05$); wanted affection--work (M = 2.9, SD = 2.8), college (M = 4.1, SD = 2.7, $p < .05$), university (M = 4.6, SD = 2.8, $p < .001$). When the college and university groups were compared, the only significant difference ($p < .05$) occurred in the expressed affection need as follows: college (M = 3.7, SD = 2.6), university (M = 4.4, SD = 2.7).

Conclusions. The results clearly identify differences in the needs of the students sampled and we review the differences here beginning with the principal area of difference, the sex characteristic. The males and females perceive their needs to be significantly different on all but one dimension of the three needs. The females have a decidedly stronger need to express inclusion and affection and to want inclusion and affection while the males have a stronger need to express control. Only in the wanted control dimension is there no significant difference. The significant differences that occur on the other characteristics undoubtedly are caused principally by the sex difference.

What does the difference suggest? It seems that the female participants not only give more acceptance and affection than the male participants do but want more given to them. The males, on the other hand, need to control others more than the females do. Neither sex wants to be controlled by others.

The wanted control factor may be important to the forensics coach or instructor. Obviously these students do not want to have others tell them what to do, therefore, the coach probably should be more democratic or non-directive in dealings with these students. The coach should utilize the students decision-making abilities and pass on many responsibilities to them, particularly the males who as a group seem interested in taking charge of things.

In working with the females, conveying acceptance and creating a more personal relationship will be helpful in establishing a productive environment. They appear to need that sort of attention more than the males.

Although we concentrated on the public school participants in this study, we did compare them to a small group of private school students. Only two significant differences occurred when the two groups were compared--on the expressed inclusion and expressed control needs. In both instances the need was stronger for the private school students, suggesting a slightly greater need on their part to be accepted and to be in charge of things.

In the years-of-participation characteristic, it appears that several needs get stronger the longer the students are involved in forensics. In expressed control, for instance, those with one or two years experience have a stronger need than those with no experience. Apparently, the longer a

student participates, the more he wants to take charge. The newcomers sit back expecting the more experienced ones to tell them what to do. Related to this is the expressed affection need. Again, the more experienced tend to express a desire to develop closer personal relations with each other and want such relations while the newcomers are more reserved, waiting to learn what will happen.

In the year-in-school characteristic, the needs of the freshmen and sophomores were not as strong as the juniors and seniors in several areas, particularly expressed inclusion, expressed affection and wanted affection. Again, the cause may be that the younger ones, still looked after by their parents and older relatives, are just beginning to find their way and do not know yet what they need or want while the needs of the older ones are becoming more pronounced. The literature on personality development, especially that on achievement and self-concept development, support this contention (1).

In the "forensic activity" and the "goals" characteristics, there were several significant differences but, in each case, these were traceable to the sex, experience or year-in-school characteristics.

A final point should be made about the FIRO-B results. The mean or average scores on each of the two dimensions of the three needs fall either into the "low" ($\underline{M}$ = 1.0-3.9) or "average" ($\underline{M}$ = 4.0 to 6.9) range as established by the experimental groups used in the development of the FIRO-B. The experimental groups were composed of college students and employed persons. As we noted previously, the personalities of younger people may not be developed enough for them to have well-conceived social needs. As a consequence, the FIRO-B may not be an appropriate measurement for distinguishing differences between the high school forensic participants on the six characteristics we examined.

On the other hand, the mean score results may be suggesting a quality about the population studied here that has nothing to do with personality development. It may be that those participating in forensics, generally speaking, have their needs satisfied, that the "low" and "average" scores indicate a group of students who have their social needs fulfilled. High school students, by and large, live at home with the family, neighbors or friends satisfying their social needs so fully that these are unimportant in their lives. They are not participating because of an overpowering need for inclusion, control, or affection but for other reasons. Should that be the case, the FIRO-B results noted here should make an important contribution to an understanding of those who take part in high school forensics. Further study seems to be in order to validate the results and perhaps resolve this issue.

CONCLUSION

In two studies we compared certain characteristics of high school students taking part in forensic activities with those not involved and we also compared groups of the forensics participants with each other. For study purposes we used three instruments, the PVB, PRCA and FIRO-B.

The studies provide tentative support for the following conclusions,

conclusions that the coach or teacher may find valuable. First, forensic participants seem to be more predisposed toward verbal interaction than non-participants. They are more apt to initiate and maintain social interactions and will talk oftener and longer than those not involved in forensics.

Second, participation in forensics tends to reduce apprehension about oral communication as those participants with one or two years of experience do not in general perceive themselves to be as anxious about talking to others as those with no experience or those not participating in the activity.

Third, female forensic participants have stronger inclusion and affection needs while the males have a stronger need to control social interactions. The needs appear to get stronger the longer the students take part in forensics as those with one or two years experience and juniors and seniors display stronger needs than those with no experience and freshmen and sophomores.

REFERENCES

[1] D. Byrne, An Introduction to Personality, 2nd. ed., Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1974, 128-176, 271-306.

[2] R. E. Cambra and D. W. Klopf, "An Exploratory Study of Contest Speaker Characteristics," Speech Education, 6, 1978, 121-131.

[3] D. W. Klopf, "A Method of Reducing Apprehension in the Classroom," Speech Education, 6, 1978, 64-73.

[4] J. McCroskey, "Measures of Communication Bound Anxiety," Speech Monographs, 1970, 37, 269-277.

[5] J. McCroskey, "Validity of the PRCA as an Index of Oral Communication Apprehension, Communication Monographs, 1978, 45, 192-203.

[6] C. David Mortensen, Paul H. Arnston, and Myron Lustig, "The Measurement of Verbal Predispositions: Scale Development and Application," Human Communication Research, 3 (Winter 1977), 146-158.

[7] William C. Schutz, The FIRO Scales-Manual (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, INc., 1976), 3-19.

[8] J. Tuccy, T-test procedure. In N. H. Nie, C. H. Hall, J. G. Jenkins, K. Steinbrenner, & D. H. Brent (eds.), Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975, 267-275.